

Nicene Creed

God the Father.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

God the Son.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

Advent and Christmas:

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

The Paschal Mystery. Lent. Easter/ Resurrection.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

Ascension – 40 days After Easter / Resurrection

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Second Coming. Final Judgement. Eternity.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

God the Holy Spirit

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

Our Catholic Church

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

<https://catholic-link.org/the-nicene-creed-explained/>

The Nicene Creed arose from the first two ecumenical councils of the Church. The first ecumenical council is the First Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D. and the second is the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. This Creed is ancient and it has preserved the faithful from a variety of heresies for over 1,600 years. To understand it is to understand what we believe as Catholics.

Paragraph 1 – God the Father

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one God in three Persons. We do not believe in three gods. Our one God is not only our king and Lord, He is our Heavenly Father. We are His children. He created everything that we can see, but He also created all the things that we cannot see. For example, we believe in the angels, in our own souls, and in the demons. God is Lord over all of it and has all might.

Even though He is tremendously powerful, our God and Father draws us into a relationship with Him and invites us to share eternal blessedness in another invisible reality: Heaven.

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Paragraph 2 – The Lord Jesus

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,

begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity is the Word of God, the Son. This Word of God, Jesus Christ, proceeds from the Father. He was “born” and “begotten” but not made. This is a mystery that is very difficult to understand. Much ink has been spilled in theology on how Jesus can be both God and man.

In other words, Jesus is fully God and He is eternal, just as the Father is eternal. This paragraph emphasizes that there is one God but the Father is nonetheless distinct as a Person from the Person of the Son.

The Council Fathers went to great length to combat the Arian heresy which claimed that Jesus was created and was not truly God. We believe that Jesus is fully God and fully man. As the Word of God, He existed forever and will always exist. He proceeds from the Father as God from God and Light from Light, true God from true God. I will go into more detail on this in the fifth paragraph on the Holy Spirit.

There is also the realization that it is through the Word of God that all things were made. God reveals to us in Genesis God speaks in order to create. He says, “Let there be light.” And there was light. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, was sent on a mission by the Father to come down from heaven in order to redeem humanity and offer us salvation.

Paragraph 3 – The Incarnation and The Virgin Mary

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

By the free choice of Mary, our Mother, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God took on flesh. Jesus Christ, the uncreated Word through which all things were made, condescended to share in our humanity. The almighty God emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave, to use the language of St. Paul.

In the Latin Rite, there is a tradition of bowing during this paragraph in honor of the Incarnation. The Incarnation is literally the “enfleshment” of Jesus; it is what we celebrate at Christmas. This paragraph marks one of the most important moments in human history. Our God became one of us.

Paragraph 4 – The Paschal Mystery

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

This paragraph is directly connected to the previous. Jesus became man in order to accomplish the work of our salvation. It was for us that Jesus was crucified. The Council Fathers include, “under Pontius Pilate” to show that this was a historical reality. It really happened. So too, Jesus truly rose from the dead on the third day after being buried.

Forty days after rising from the dead, He lifted Himself up into Heaven in a mysterious fashion and He now reigns in Heaven as King at the right hand of the Father. We believe that He will come again in glory. This is what we call the

Second Coming. At the second coming of Christ, we will all be judged; everything we have done will be laid bare and true justice will be accomplished.

This second coming will result in the passing away of the old Heaven and the old Earth and the establishing of Jesus' everlasting kingdom.

Paragraph 5 – The Holy Spirit

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one God in three Persons. The third Person of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit, who we also rightly call Lord and the giver of life. God breathed life into the first man, after all. This holy breath of God is the Spirit which gives life and sustains life. He is glorified and loved as God, along with the Father and the Son. We believe that the Holy Spirit, preceding the Incarnation as well as after, inspired the prophets.

The Trinity is the mystery of God, as He is. It is difficult to wrap our minds around this mystery in any meaningful way. Our metaphors are usually material, like a three-leaf clover or the states of water as ice, liquid, or vapor, and because they are material, they always fall short. God is spiritual, not material. The best explanation I have heard of the Blessed Trinity is from St. Augustine's Analogy of the Mind. I will try my best to offer a simplified version. Though, it is far from simple.

In our own minds, we have intellect and will. We know things and act freely. When we learn or know things, we have a procession of the intellect. When we act freely upon ourselves or the world, we have a procession of the will. If we analogously apply this understanding to the “mind of God,” we see a procession of the intellect and a procession of the will. God is perfect and so these processions must be infinite and perfect.

The procession of the intellect, within the mind of God, is God the Father’s perfect knowledge of Himself. This perfect image of Himself is the Son. The Son, in return, perfectly loves the Father. God is love. Therefore, the procession of His will is perfect love which proceeds as the love shared between the Father and the Son. This is the Holy Spirit. However, we must understand that He does not proceed in time, as He is as eternal as the Father and the Son.

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Paragraph 6 – The Church

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

The Church of Jesus Christ is His Mystical Body. Therefore the Church is holy, even if the human beings who compromise it are not always holy. The Church is one because Christ is one. The Church is catholic because the Church is “universal.” Catholic means universal. And the Church is apostolic because Christ founded it upon the Apostles.

We enter into this Church through the one Baptism of Christ, by which we are cleansed of original sin, are grafted onto Christ, and become adopted sons and daughters of God.

We believe that when Christ comes again, we will be reunited with our bodies in a glorified way, similar to Christ's resurrected Body. We do not know exactly what this will look like.

And we look forward to the life of the world to come which is eternal blessedness in the company of the angels and the saints in constant praise and love of God. We will want for nothing and all suffering will be no more.

Conclusion – Amen

Amen.

And finally... amen! Amen means "yes," "so be it," and "I believe." It is the only ending to the Creed that we can offer as human beings. God has revealed all He is and all that He has done for us, and our confident and faithful "Amen" is the response of our heart.